Forces. The amount for which the contracts/schemes have been finalized is Rs. 179.09 crore.

Appointment of chief of defence staff

29. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what decision, if any, has been taken on the recommendation of the Kargil committee for appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff, for better integration of the defence forces; and

(b) the reasons for delay in implementing the same and the steps being taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Group of Ministers (GoM) in their Report on "Reforming the National Security System", *inter alia* recommended the establishment of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). The recommendations made in the Report of the GoM were approved by the Government on May 11, 2001 with modification that a view on the recommendation relating tc the institution of the CDS will be taken after consultation with political parties. While a decision on the institution of Chief of Defence Staff has not been taken in view of the complexities and sensitivities involved, a number of institutions like Integrated Defence Staff, Tri-Service bodies like the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), the Strategic Forces Command and the Andaman & Nicobar Theatre Command have been established to achieve the basic objectives behind the establishment of the Chief of Defence Staff. Further discussions including a detailed examination of pros and cons of the proposal are considered necessary before the formulation of Government's views on the subject. A decision regarding appointment of the CDS can be taken only after wider consultation with various political parties.

Instruction for making available defence helicopters

30. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested Union Government to issue necessary instructions to the Flag Officers (Eastern Naval Command), Vishakhapatnam and Indian Air Force Base, Hyderabad